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# Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIE-00 INRE-00 NSCE-00 AID-05 EA-06 /060 W
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O 172150Z APR 75
FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2948

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 2747

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: CI, PFOR
SUBJECT: REACTION TO PRESIDENT FORD'S FOREIGN POLICY ADDRESS

REF: A. STATE 086289; B. SANTIAGO 2671; C. SANTIAGO 2265
D. SANTIAGO 2089

1. SPECIFIC MEDIA REACTION TO PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS HAS BEEN OVERSHADOWED BY CONTINUING EXTENSIVE COVERAGE ON INDOCHINA, PREOCCUPATION WITH GOC CABINET CHANGES IN RECENT DAYS, AND TO LESSER DEGREE REACTION TO CANCELLATION OF SECRETARY KISSINGER'S VISIT TO CHILE. NEWS COVERAGE OF SPEECH WAS MODEST; CONSERVATIVE "EL MERCURIO", CHILE'S MOST INFLUENTIAL DAILY, CARRIED SOLE EDITORIAL PAGE COMMENTARY APRIL 14. STATED PRESIDENT'S INITIATIVE CONCERNING ADDITIONAL AID FOR VIETNAM WAS SKILLFUL, AUDACIOUS AND ORIENTED TOWARDS TWO OBJECTIVES: RECOVERY OF U.S. INTERNATIONAL CREDIBILITY AND PLACING OF RESPONSIBILITY ON CONGRESS FOR CONSEQUENCES OF AID CUTOFF.

2. THERE HAS BEEN NO OFFICIAL GOC REACTION TO ADDRESS, AND WE HAVE NOTED NO SIGNIFICANT PRIVATE COMMENT.

3. INDOCHINA DEVELOPMENTS HAVE BEEN GIVEN EXTRAORDINARY ATTENTION AND APPEAR TO HAVE HAD SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON GOC AND PUBLIC OPINION MAKERS. AS NOTED IN RECENT EMBASSY CONFIDENTIAL

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REPORTING, WE BELIEVE THEIR PERCEPTION OF US HAS BEEN AFFECTED.

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GOVERNMENT LEADERS ARE CAUTIOUS ABOUT CRITICIZING US ON
INDOCHINA. THEY AND MEDIA, HOWEVER, APPEAR TO PERCEIVE
A WEAKENED US, PURSUING A MISGUIDED POLICY AND BESTED
BY WORLD COMMUNIST STRATEGY. THEY SEEM TO HAVE INCREASED DOUBTS
THAT US WOULD DEFEND CHILE OR ANY OF ITS OTHER FRIENDS
OR ALLIES IN CASE OF NEED.

4. TAKEN TOGETHER WITH CANCELLATION OF SECRETARY
KISSINGER'S VISIT TO CHILE, INDOCHINA DEVELOPMENTS AND
DIVISIVE DEBATE ON THEM IN US HAVE AT LEAST FOR MOMENT
DIMINISHED OUR STANDING HERE. THEY HAVE ALSO FORTIFIED
ESTABLISHMENT CHILEANS IN THEIR COLD-WAR TYPE VIEW OF
THE CURRENT WORLD SITUATION AND RAISED DOUBTS RE US
CONSTANCY AND STRENGTH OF WILL VIS-A-VIS LATIN AMERICA
AND OTHER AREAS IN WHICH US HAS INTERESTS. UNDER MOMENTARY
INFLUENCE OF DRAMATIC EVENTS THERE IS A TENDENCY TO SEEK
A STRENGTHENING OF TIES WITHIN LATIN AMERICA (PARA 2 REF B)
AS MEANS OF COMPENSATING FOR PERCEIVED US WEAKNESS. WE
REMAIN CHILE'S MOST IMPORTANT ALLY, HOWEVER, AND
CHILEAN INTERESTS ARE INTIMATELY RELATED TO US. THERE
IS ACCORDINGLY NO SERIOUS PROSPECT OF ANY CHANGE IN BASIC
GOC ORIENTATION IN NEAR FUTURE.
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# Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994
**Channel Indicators:** n/a
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED
**Concepts:** PRESS COMMENTS, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS, SPEECHES, FOREIGN POLICY  POSITION
**Control Number:** n/a
**Copy:** SINGLE
**Draft Date:** 17 APR 1975
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960
**Decaption Note:**
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED
**Disposition Approved on Date:**
**Disposition Authority:** GolinoFR
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004
**Disposition Event:**
**Disposition History:** n/a
**Disposition Reason:**
**Disposition Remarks:**
**Document Number:** 1975SANTIA02747
**Document Source:** CORE
**Document Unique ID:** 00
**Drafter:** n/a
**Enclosure:** n/a
**Executive Order:** GS
**Errors:** N/A
**Film Number:** D750135-0456
**From:** SANTIAGO
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a
**Image Path:**
**ISecure:** 1
**Legacy Key:** link1975/newtext/t19750441/aaaabmjr.tel
**Line Count:** 84
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
**Office:** ACTION ARA
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a
**Page Count:** 2
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a
**Reference:** 75 STATE 086289, 75 SANTIAGO 2671, 75 SANTIAGO 2265
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED
**Review Authority:** GolinoFR
**Review Comment:** n/a
**Review Content Flags:**
**Review Date:** 08 SEP 2003
**Review Event:**
**Review Exemptions:** n/a
**Review History:** RELEASED <08 SEP 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <14 NOV 2003 by GolinoFR>
**Review Markings:**

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US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**
**Review Referrals:** n/a
**Review Release Date:** n/a
**Review Release Event:** n/a
**Review Transfer Date:**
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a
**Secure:** OPEN
**Status:** NATIVE
**Subject:** REACTION TO PRESIDENT FORD'S FOREIGN POLICY ADDRESS
**TAGS:** PFOR, CI, US, (FORD, GERALD R)
**To:** STATE
**Type:** TE
**Markings:**  Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006